



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service
Food and Drug Administration

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San Francisco District
1431 Harbor Bay Parkway
Alameda, California 94502-7070
Telephone: (510) 337-6700

Via Federal Express

Our Reference: 29-51495

January 21, 2000

William P. Vander Poel, Partner
Tule River Dairy
15503 Road 96
Tipton, California 93272

WARNING LETTER

Dear Mr. Vander Poel:

Tissue residue reports from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and an investigation of your dairy located in Tipton, your calf ranch located in Tulare, and your heifer ranch located in Visalia, CA, on November 29 through December 17, 1999, by Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Investigator Thomas W. Gordon have revealed serious violations of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (the Act) as follows:

A food is adulterated under Section 402(a)(2)(C)(ii) of the Act if it contains a new animal drug that is unsafe within the meaning of Section 512. On September 24, 1999, you consigned a cow (identified by USDA laboratory report number 347722) to be slaughtered for human food. This cow was delivered for introduction into interstate commerce by your firm and was adulterated by the presence of illegal drug residues. USDA analysis of tissues from this cow revealed gentamicin in the kidney at 0.01 parts per million (ppm). Presently, there is no tolerance level for gentamicin in the uncooked edible tissues of cattle.

A food is adulterated under Section 402(a)(4) of the Act "if it has been prepared, packed, or held under insanitary conditions...whereby it may have been rendered injurious to health." As it applies in this case, "insanitary conditions" means that you hold animals which are ultimately offered for sale for slaughter as food under conditions which are so inadequate that medicated animals bearing possibly harmful drug residues are likely to enter the food supply. For example, our investigator noted the following:

1. You lack an adequate system for determining the medication status of animals you offer for sale at auction or slaughter.
2. You lack an adequate system for assuring that animals to which you administer medication have been withheld from slaughter for appropriate periods of time to deplete potentially hazardous residues of drugs.
3. You lack an adequate system for assuring that drugs are used in a manner consistent with the directions contained in their labeling.

4. You lack an adequate system for assuring that animals are treated with drugs that have been approved for use in their class of animal or species.

5. You lack an adequate inventory system for determining the quantities of drugs used to medicate your cows and calves.

You are adulterating the drug gentamicin within the meaning of Section 501(a)(5) of the Act, in that it is a new animal drug within the meaning of Section 201(v) and is unsafe within the meaning of Section 512(a)(1)(B) since it is not being used in conformance with approved labeling. Your veterinarian's prescription label specifies gentamicin is to be used for the treatment of scours and septicemia in replacement heifer calves. In addition, the prescription indicates a dosage of 2 milliliters (ml) per 100 pounds of body weight per day, limited to five treatments, and a withdrawal time of eighteen months prior to slaughter. Administering gentamicin to a cow, coupled with an inadequate withdrawal time, is likely the cause of the illegal residue found in the aforementioned cow. In addition, your practice of administering gentamicin to bull calves is not in conformance with your veterinarian's prescription labeling.

You are adulterating the drug Quartermaster brand of penicillin-dihydrostreptomycin within the meaning of Section 501(a)(5) of the Act, in that it is a new animal drug within the meaning of Section 201(v) and is unsafe within the meaning of Section 512(a)(1)(B) since it is not being used in conformance with approved labeling. Labeling for Quartermaster specifies milk taken from treated cows within ninety-six hours (eight milkings) after calving must not be used for food. Your practice of using milk for food, from treated cows, after six milkings is not in conformance with approved labeling.

Failure to comply with the label instructions on drugs you use to treat your animals presents the likely possibility that illegal residues will occur and makes the drugs unsafe for use. We request that you take prompt action to ensure that animals which you offer for sale as human food will not be adulterated with drugs or contain illegal residues.

Introducing adulterated foods into interstate commerce is a violation of Section 301(a) of the Act. Causing the adulteration of drugs after receipt in interstate commerce is a violation of Section 301(k) of the Act.

You should be aware that it is not necessary for you to have personally shipped an adulterated animal in interstate commerce to be responsible for a violation of the Act. The fact that you offered an adulterated animal for sale to a slaughter facility where it was held for sale in interstate commerce is sufficient to make you responsible for violations of the Act.

Your firm has established a history of offering cull cows and calves for sale for human food use which have been found to be adulterated with drug residues. According to USDA analytical reports, during the period of August 16, 1994 through September 24, 1999, you sold two cows and five calves for human food which were found to contain illegal drug residues. As a result of the violative residues, inspections were conducted of your dairy on November 2, 1994, and on July 25 through August 17, 1995. During each of those inspections you were warned that it is illegal to market animals with illegal levels of antibiotics. Warning Letters, dated November 23, 1994, and January 8, 1996, were sent to you as a result of these inspections. Also, USDA sent you a letter for each instance in

which their analysis found violative levels of drug residues. You have failed to take adequate corrective action. It is your responsibility to ensure that all requirements of the Act and regulations are being met. Failure to achieve prompt corrective action may result in enforcement action without further notice, including seizure and/or injunction.

Within fifteen (15) days of the receipt of this letter, please notify our Fresno office in writing of the specific steps you have taken to correct these violations and preclude their recurrence. If corrective action cannot be completed within fifteen working days, state the reason for the delay and the time frame within which corrections will be completed. Your response should address each discrepancy brought to your attention during the inspection and in this letter, and should include copies of any documentation demonstrating that corrections have been made. Please direct your reply to Thomas W. Gordon, Investigator, United States Food and Drug Administration, 2202 Monterey Street, Suite 104E, Fresno, California 93721.

Sincerely yours,


Acting Director
San Francisco District

cc:

